



Bullying: How to Protect Your Child



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Objectives

- Learn about different forms of bullying and its effects
- Discuss warning signs that may indicate a child is being bullied
- Learn prevention tips and coping strategies
- Effectively communicate with your child's school to make positive changes
- Discuss what to do if you suspect your child is bullying others



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What Is Bullying?

Aggressive behavior that is:

- Intentional
- Repeated over time
- Involves imbalance of power or strength



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Types of Bullying

- Physical bullying—hitting, punching
- Verbal bullying—name calling, teasing
- Emotional bullying—intimidation, exclusion
- Cyberbullying—bullying using the Internet, mobile phones or other technology



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Who is Bullied?

- Common characteristics of children who are bullied:
 - shy, sensitive or insecure children
 - socially isolated children
 - boys who are physically weaker than their peers
 - children with disabilities or special needs
- Verbal bullying is the most common form of bullying amongst boys and girls
- Boys are more likely to be physically bullied than girls
- Girls are more likely to be targets of rumors and sexual comments
- Social exclusion is another form of bullying more common in girls than boys



Effects of Bullying

Students who are bullied have:

- Lower self-esteem
- Higher rates of depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts
- Health-related problems (headaches, stomach ailments and sleeping problems)
- Higher absenteeism rates at school
- Bullying in children has even led to depression and low self-esteem in adults



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Is Your Child Being Bullied?

- Subtle changes in behavior (withdrawn, anxious, preoccupied, demonstrates loss of interest in school and in favorite activities)
- Comes home from school with bruises and scratches, torn or dirtied clothing, or with missing or damaged books and property
- Loss of appetite
- Excessive trips to the school nurse
- Inability to sleep, bad dreams, crying in sleep
- Repeatedly loses clothing, money, or other valuables



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Is Your Child Being Bullied? (con't)

- Appears afraid or reluctant to go to school in the morning
- Repeated headaches or stomachaches—particularly in the morning
- Chooses a roundabout or strange route to and from school
- Feels lonely
- Sensitive or withdrawn when asked about his or her day
- Suffers from low self-esteem and appears anxious



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Helping Your Child Cope With Bullying

Step One: Be Supportive

- Be emotionally strong
- Empathize with your child and reassure him or her that you are there to help
- Do not assume your child did anything to provoke the situation
- Ask your child to describe incidents and people involved
- Ask your child if there were witnesses, especially adults who may have seen incidents
- Do not encourage physical retaliation
- Do not criticize your child for how he or she may have handled the situation



Helping Your Child Cope With Bullying (con't)

Step Two: Contact Your Child's School

- Relay facts that you have gathered including specific incidents, names, etc. and provide written documentation
- Ask what the school's policies are and whether they have anti-bullying programs in place
- School administrators will likely want to meet with your child to learn more. They may also interview the "bullies." Do not allow the school to interview the children at the same time.
- Do not contact the bully's parents on your own; the school should handle this on your behalf



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Helping Your Child Cope With Bullying (con't)

- Ask the school what they will do to prevent future incidents and to protect your child
- Take notes at each of your meetings
- Talk with the school regularly and make sure the bullying has ended
- If bullying persists and your child is physically injured or threatened, contact the authorities



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Helping Your Child Cope With Bullying

Help Your Child Become More Resilient

- Teach your child safety strategies
- Tell your child to report all bullying and to seek help from you and other adults
- Direct your child to helpful web sites and information on bullying
- Play up positive attributes of your child and encourage activities that will boost self-esteem
- Encourage healthy friendships with children who share similar interests



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Helping Your Child Cope With Bullying (con't)

- Remind your child never to resort to violence
- If your child has a disability or special needs, additional strategies may be required. Speak to your child's teachers and schools for advice and information.
- Foster a healthy home environment where your child feels safe, secure and unafraid to talk to you about concerns



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Tips For Coping With Cyberbullies

- Strongly encourage your child not to respond to the cyberbullying.
- Do not erase the messages or pictures. Save them as evidence.
- Try to identify the individual doing the cyber bullying.
- Consider contacting providers and filing a complaint.
- It may be possible to block future contact from the cyberbully if it comes from e-mail or cell phone.



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Tips For Coping With Cyberbullies (con't)

- Contact your school. If the cyber bullying is occurring through your school district's Internet system, school administrators have an obligation to intervene. Even if the cyber bullying is occurring off campus, make your school administrators aware of the problem.
- Consider contacting the cyberbully's parents in writing.
- Consider contacting an attorney in cases of serious cyber bullying.
- Contact the police if cyber bullying involves violent threats, obscenities, child pornography or other criminal matters



Is Your Child Bullying Others?

Has your child:

- Hit, punched, pushed or physically harmed another child for no apparent reason?
- Had someone else hurt a child he or she does not like?
- Spread rumors about other kids, in person or through e-mail or IM?
- Excluded another child from playing or hanging out with a group of his or her friends?
- Teased other children in a mean way?
- Been part of a group that did any of these things?



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Children Who Bully

Common Characteristics:

- Impulsive, hot-headed, dominant
- Self-confident
- Easily frustrated
- Lack empathy
- Have difficulty following rules
- View violence in a positive way
- Boys who bully tend to be physically stronger than other children



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Children Who Bully

Teens who frequently bully their peers are more likely than others to:

- Get into frequent fights
- Be injured in a fight
- Vandalize or steal property
- Drink alcohol
- Smoke
- Be truant from school
- Drop out of school
- Carry a weapon



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If Your Child Is Bullying Others...

- Make it clear to your child that you do not tolerate bullying
- Develop clear and consistent rules—and follow-through on them
- Teach your child to consider other's feelings
- Spend more time with your child and carefully monitor his/her activities.
- Build on your child's talents by encouraging involvement in pro-social activities
- Work with your child's teachers, counselor, or principal to ensure behavior is corrected
- Consider having your child speak to the guidance counselor or mental health professional



State Anti-Bullying Laws

- As of 2013 - 49 states have passed anti-bullying laws
- The only state without is Montana and is considering legislation
- Most state laws require or encourage schools to develop programs and rules that prohibit bullying
- Several states have issued model policies and procedures



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Resources

- **Helpful Web Sites**

- www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov
- www.safeyouth.org
- www.kidshealth.org

- **Helpful Books and Articles**



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WorkLife4You Resources

WorkLife4You web site www.worklife4you.com

- **Child Care & Parenting Web Service**
 - Bullying Library
- **Audio Tips and Podcasts**
 - Electronic Aggression
- **HTML Articles**
- **Related Web Sites**
- **OnDemand Webinars**

Bullying: How to Protect Your Child, Internet Safety for Parents, Keeping Children Safe in an Uncertain World,
- **WorkLife4You Guides**

Tips for Parents of Bullied Children, What Should I Do If I Am Bullied, What to Do If Your Child Is Being Bullied, Child Safety: The Internet and Television



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